



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

September 30, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Charles Johnson  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
108 Federal Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Secretary Johnson:

I am writing to express my alarm, and to request your help, regarding the significant increase in immigrants who are once again pouring across our border illegally. According to U.S. Border Patrol reports, nearly 10,000 immigrant families and unaccompanied children were detained after illegally crossing the Southwest border in August, an increase of more than 50 percent over August 2014. This distressing trend continues to threaten our nation's sovereignty, and substantially strains state resources to deal with the health, education and welfare costs associated with the illegal entry into the U.S.

As you know, the problem is compounded by the drug cartels and transnational gang enterprises that are involved in this illegal cross border activity. The illegal border crossings often serve as camouflage for hostile transnational criminal organizations that bring drugs, human trafficking, home invasions, kidnapping and other heinous acts to Texas. And, those same transnational gangs profit mightily from a porous border. Whether they are smuggling people or products illegally across our border or selling would-be immigrants into sex slavery, the cartels get rich.

I ask for your immediate and bold action to prevent this from escalating into an uncontrollable crisis. To that end, I request the following:

- 250 additional Border Patrol agents to be assigned to Texas;
- Five additional aerostats to vastly improve law enforcement's strategic information about and response to often-violent cross-border smuggling activity;
- A listing of the conditions under which individuals will be released to relatives or to private organizations in Texas communities, to include screening procedures, and into what agencies' or entities' custody the individuals will be released and under what premise they will be kept;

The Honorable Jeh Charles Johnson  
September 30, 2015  
Page 2

- Continued federal diligence and partnership with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Department of Justice, and the State of Texas in maintaining the detention capabilities of the two detention centers in Texas.

Please know that Texas is doing more than its share to deal with these challenges. This spring, I signed into law the largest border security plan ever enacted by a state. Texas is dedicating more than \$800 million to help secure the border. The bulk is devoted to “Operation Secure Texas,” which launched on September 1, 2015. This plan includes 250 additional Texas Department of Public Safety troopers permanently stationed in the border region, a Texas Ranger Company, a high-altitude aircraft with aerial observation capabilities, tactical marine and ground vehicles, the installation of 4,000 new real-time surveillance cameras and other detection technology, a training facility and a Border Prosecution Unit to bring to justice the many sources of cross-border corruption and other criminal activity.

Texas is stepping up to do its part, but the primary responsibility for securing our sovereign border lies with the federal government. And despite brave and determined efforts by courageous men and women in state, local and federal law enforcement (including U.S. Border Patrol), it is apparent that the current allocation of federal resources is not sufficient to interdict, disrupt or deter the criminal enterprises infiltrating our southern border. Indeed, the neglect shown by the federal government has emboldened the criminal enterprises engaged in the human trafficking that lies behind this escalating trend of illegal human smuggling.

Texas will continue to be assertive in securing our border. But given recent reports that our southern border has become more porous — not less, it is clearer than ever that the federal government must act to reverse the tide of this mounting crisis. I ask for your most urgent reply to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Abbott", written in a cursive style.

Greg Abbott  
Governor

GA:mhk